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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the extent to which native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) of Portuguese understand implicatures in Brazilian television commercials in Portuguese. Subjects were nine Brazilian graduate students and 11 American students of Portuguese at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign. Correct inference of the implicatures was measured by a multiple-choice test, followed by an oral interview. Results revealed that the NSs' interpretation of implicatures was very uniform, with an average of correct answers (93.3 percent). Conversely, the performance of the NNSs varied, with an average of 47.3 percent correct answers. This was found to be true even in cases in which the implicatures in Brazilian Portuguese operated the same as in American English. Analysis of the data suggest that each case of successful inference requires some specific knowledge that may not be equally shared among NSs and NNSs. It is recommended that the pragmatic competence of American learners of Portuguese be addressed in language instruction. (MSE)

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A Cross-Cultural Study of Implicatures in Brazilian TV Commercials

by

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"A Cross-Cultural Study of Implicatures in Brazilian TV Commercials"

by
ROSANGELA S. SILVA

Abstract

A review of the literature suggests that non-native speakers (NNSs) interpret contextualized implicatures in English differently from native speakers (NSs) (Devine, 1982; Bouton, 1988, 1989). The present study verifies these findings through the use of TV commercials in Portuguese, which offer authentic linguistic models within dynamic contexts. The study addresses the following questions: Do NNSs of Portuguese infer implicatures from Brazilian TV commercials the way NSs do? If not, what kind of constraints might account for the difference between NNSs and NSs? Nine Brazilian graduate students at the UIUC and eleven American students of Portuguese 212 (conversation and composition) at the UIUC served as subjects. Correct inference of the implicatures was measured through a multiple-choice test, followed by an oral interview. Results revealed that the Brazilians' interpretation of implicatures was extraordinarily uniform, with a high average of correct answers (93.3%). Conversely, the performance of the Americans varied, as represented by the low average (47.3%) of correct answers. This was true even in those cases in which the implicatures in Brazilian Portuguese work the same as in American English. The analysis of the data suggests that each case of successful inference requires some specific knowledge which may not be equally shared among NSs and NNSs. This study proposes that pragmatic competence of American learners of Portuguese needs to be reinforced through language instruction.

INTRODUCTION

Linguists have recognized that second language acquisition (SLA) should go beyond the acquisition of the forms of the language to include the acquisition of the rules governing discourse (Larsen-Freeman, 1980; Savignon, 1983). In other words, second language (L2) learners should acquire pragmatic competence - the ability to produce appropriate discourse forms. It is also widely accepted that a great part of our daily communication includes what Grice called *conversational implicature*. Thus, one important aspect of a speaker's communicative competence is the ability to use implicatures.

Three studies (Devine, 1982; Bouton, 1988, 1989) have compared the interpretation of written conversations containing implicatures by native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) of English at American universities. Their findings suggest that the use of implicature in cross-cultural interaction was a potential barrier to effective communication.

Previous research has studied implicatures found in written conversations in English but this study attempts to observe and compare cross-cultural ability to interpret implicatures in the audio-visual medium of Brazilian TV commercials. Two main questions will be verified: Do NNSs and NSs of Portuguese interpret implicatures in Brazilian TV commercials in the same way? If not, what kind of constraints might account for the difference between NSs and NNSs?

The present study is comprised of three major parts. Section 1 reviews Grice's theory of conversation and discusses the importance

of conversational implicatures in TV advertisements. Section 2 presents a brief summary of Silva (1993), which provides evidence of the uses of implicature in Brazilian advertising. Finally section 3 compares the ability of NSs and NNSs of Portuguese to understand implicatures in Brazilian TV commercials.

1. CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE and TV COMMERCIALS

1.1. Grice's theory of conversation

Linguists have claimed that when you know a language you know a set of rules for producing sentences in that language. They say that languages are 'rule-governed' entities, and the evidence of your 'knowledge' of the language is your ability to speak in grammatical sentences. Some social scientists have tried to characterize certain aspects of social behavior in similar terms, i.e., through rules. And the rules and conventions for language use are a part of the general rules and conventions for social behavior (Preston, 1989; Wardhaugh, 1985). Some linguists (Lakoff, 1973, among others) have shown interest in the philosophical ideas concerning the organization of conversation and particular attention has been given to Grice's ideas, presented in lectures entitled 'Logic and Conversation' (1975).

The philosopher H. P. Grice suggested that in a conversation human beings follow the Cooperative Principle, which is to "... make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk

exchange in which you are engaged." (1975:45) Related to this general principle, there are some rules that specify what must or must not be included in conversation. These rules, or maxims, are classified as maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner.

Under the maxim of Quality there is the general maxim "be truthful" and two more specific maxims: 1. do not say what you believe to be false; and 2. do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. The maxim of Quantity, as the name suggests, is related to the quantity of information to be given and has the following submaxims: 1. give as much information as is required (for the current purposes of exchange); and 2. do not give more information than is required. The maxim of Relation contains the single maxim "be relevant," which does not mean it is a simple rule. In fact, Grice suggests that this rule can be problematic due to the difficulty of establishing a satisfactory definition of relevance, a position shared by Dascal (1982). The last maxim, that of Manner, is related not to what is said (as in the previous ones) but to how what is said must be said (1975:46). It includes the maxim "be perspicuous" and four submaxims: 1. avoid obscurity of expression; 2. avoid ambiguity; 3. be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity); and 4. be orderly. Although we may find some indeterminacy in Grice's system, it is an important attempt to explain certain principles that seem to lie behind most conversations.

These rules of conversational behavior are not taught or learned, and speakers do not follow them consciously (Green, 1990). Therefore, in a conversation where the goal is the exchange of information the participants are expected to observe the Cooperative

Principle and the utterances are expected to be true, sufficiently informative, relevant and clear. Consequently, when the contribution of a speaker apparently loses one of these characteristics, the other participants assume that it is done on purpose and as a result they adopt strategies of interpreting the utterance according to the maxims and the Cooperative Principle in order to infer a more cooperative meaning. The use of these maxims, which Grice calls *implicature*, is the mechanism through which an utterance can communicate more than what is literally said.

An example of implicature cited by Levinson (1983:107) is the following:

A: Can you tell me the time?

B: Well, the milkman has come.

It is unlikely that someone would interpret **B**'s response as irrelevant, even though it may seem so at the first glance. If we assume that **B** is being cooperative, we may infer that **B** cannot (or does not want to) give the full information, but thinks that the milkman's arrival might provide **A** with the means of deriving an answer. Therefore, **A** may deduce that **B** intends to convey that the time is at least after whenever the milkman normally calls.

1.2. Conversational implicature in TV advertisements: the role of the context

Two comprehensive studies of the language of advertising have been developed by Leech (1966) and Geis (1982). The former was concerned with documenting the various linguistic devices employed by British advertisers; the latter was concerned with American advertising, not only how advertisers use language but also how consumers can be expected to interpret it, thus having a largely psycholinguistic focus. Geis demonstrates that advertisements in general (including TV commercials) very frequently convey their messages through indirect means, or through implicatures. He claims that this is due to two main factors: first, that indirectly conveyed propositions are perceptually less salient than asserted propositions and will less likely stimulate consumer cognitive defenses (i.e., consumer cognitive defenses will tend to be less aroused by conversational implicatures than by claims overtly asserted). Second, since they have to be "worked out" by the listener, the listener may find them to be more persuasive than asserted claims.

The high frequency of implicatures in Brazilian TV commercials was demonstrated by Silva (1993), who also suggested the use of these commercials as samples of authentic models of language, since they are produced with a goal different from the exemplification of language behavior.

Another reason for using audio-visuals is related to context. The relevance of context to drawing inferences is defined by Grice (1975), who claims that for one to recognize that a conversational implicature is present, speaker and hearer must share the

conventional meaning of the words used, the Cooperative Principle and its maxims, the background knowledge necessary to derive the implicature, and the context -- linguistic and otherwise. The context, then, is crucial in understanding implicatures, and TV commercials have the advantage of offering dynamic contexts that employ auditory as well as visual communication channels, showing the use of different verbal and nonverbal devices such as intonation, tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, etc.

2. CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE IN THE BEST BRAZILIAN TV COMMERCIALS OF THE LAST DECADE

In this section I will briefly summarize the previous study of conversational implicature in TV commercials developed by Silva (1993). The purpose of the study was to identify implicatures in Brazilian TV commercials. The commercials were selected as the best Brazilian TV commercials of the last decade, by the "Associação Brasileira de Propaganda." In 15 commercials analyzed, 33 implicatures were identified and discussed in terms of Grice's conversational maxims. In order to confirm the implicature for each case, the commercials were presented to a group of 12 Brazilians, all graduate students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). They were asked to say, in their own words, what the speaker in the commercial meant when s/he uttered the specific utterances previously selected as containing implicatures. The

implicatures were then identified with 95% minimum agreement among the NS informants.

The high frequency of implicatures in these commercials indicated that they are a communicative mechanism widely used by speakers of Brazilian Portuguese and that TV commercials are an excellent source of authentic examples of implicature in Brazilian Portuguese. A question which remained to be examined was whether or not, given the same context, NNSs and NSs of Portuguese interpret conversational implicatures in Brazilian TV commercials in the same way. This is the purpose of the present study.

3. A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF IMPLICATURE IN BRAZILIAN TV COMMERCIALS

3.1. METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The subjects were divided into two main groups, randomly selected. One was composed of nine NSs of Portuguese, all graduate students at the UIUC (none of them participated in the previous study). They were in various fields of study: Agriculture, Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, and Social Science. The other group was made up of 11 NNSs, all American students of Portuguese 212 (Conversation and Composition). This course is offered to students who finish the four semester sequence of the basic Portuguese language program at the UIUC (Port 101-104), required to fulfill the

foreign language requirements. The NNSs were considered to be approximately at the same level of Portuguese since they had satisfactory performance in the Port 212 course.

Corpus

The corpus of this study was composed of five TV commercials selected from the 15 commercials studied in Silva (1993). They advertise five different products: an alcoholic drink, a car, a sound stereo, a typewriter, and health insurance. In a purely linguistic sense, the texts of the commercials used common and basic vocabulary, which would present no problem to students who are able to manage in a Conversation course in Portuguese. In addition, if we consider Bouton (1992), language proficiency would not be a relevant factor in the discussion about the NNSs' apparent lack of ability to infer implicatures in an L2. He compared the scores of university NNSs who just arrived to the USA with the scores of the same group of NNSs, after living in the USA for 4 1/2 years. Using exactly the same tests both times, he found there was little, if any, correlation between a person's performance on the EPT (English Proficiency Test) and the ability to interpret implicatures effectively.

Procedure

In deciding which kind of instrument would be most appropriate for this experiment, I first considered using an open ended format. This kind of instrument would avoid forcing subjects to focus on implied meaning that they might not otherwise notice. But, as Bouton (1989) claims, this unstructured questionnaire

presents serious problems: it is very difficult to quantify as well as to evaluate, since the open answers of the subjects are often ambiguous. He suggests an investigative tool in a multiple choice format, followed by an oral interview, which were the tools chosen for this experiment.

For each commercial the subjects were asked to follow the same steps: reading the text of the commercial followed by watching it on the video. After this, they were asked to focus on the single underlined utterance of each text, and choose among the 4 options the one that best answered the question: "What does the underlined utterance mean in this context?" After marking the answers, both groups (NSs and NNSs) were interviewed to elicit information about *how* they came to their conclusions. They were asked "Now, please, explain to me why you chose that alternative. What made you interpret this utterance this way?" Their answers were recorded and then transcribed and analyzed.

DEVELOPING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Selection of the correct answers for the questionnaire:

In our previous work "Conversational implicature in the best Brazilian TV commercials of the last decade," a group of 12 Brazilians had agreed on the meaning of the implicatures in each commercial. In this study, these implicatures were used as the initial "correct answers" of the questionnaire.

Selection of the distractors of the questionnaire:

In order to choose the distractors, I worked with a group of 14 students of Port 102-103, randomly selected, 7 commercials and an open ended questionnaire. Since these subjects are at a lower level of Portuguese, they were expected to make mistakes, which would be used as distractors. We understood that distractors invented by people who are aware of the right answer may end up as artificial options. On the other hand, these distractors provided by NNS are more natural options, given that they were chosen by people who were engaged in *figuring out* the correct answer. In this way, they become plausible alternatives for one who does not fully understand the implicature.

First, the subjects were asked to read the text of each commercial, and then watch it in the video. Following this, they were to focus on the underlined sentence of the text and write down, in English, and in their own words, what the specific underlined utterance meant in the context of the commercial. Their answers were then collected and three responses that differed from the one of the NSs, were chosen as distractors for the multiple choice test to be used with the experimental groups.

Questionnaire of the experimental groups:

From the seven commercials used with the pilot group of NNSs (students of Port 102-103), five commercials were selected to be used with the experimental groups. One commercial was excluded because it presented a linguistic problem due to a specific word[1]

From the six commercials left, I chose the five that offered the most precise and clear options.

To summarize, the right options of the multiple choice questionnaire were the 'correct answers' chosen by Brazilians in our previous study while the distractors were chosen from the 'wrong answers' of the NNSs, in the open-ended questionnaire. With the objective of testing the questionnaire, and detecting possible problems with any of the four options, before giving it to the experimental groups, it was tested on a pilot group of five Brazilians[2]. When I was sure the questionnaire was clear enough to a native speaker of Portuguese, I began the work with the experimental groups of NNSs and NSs.

The procedure used in collecting data from the experimental groups was the following: initially the subjects read the text of the commercial and then saw the video of it. Following this, they were asked to focus on the single underlined utterance of each text, and choose among the four options the one that best answered the question: "What does the underlined utterance mean in that context?" After marking their answers, NSs and NNSs were interviewed individually. They were asked: "Now, please, explain to me why you chose that alternative. What made you interpret this utterance this way?" Their answers were recorded and then transcribed and analyzed.

3.2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The combination of a multiple choice format with a post-test interview was very helpful, because the oral interviews complemented and explained some of the results of the multiple-choice questionnaire. It is very difficult, perhaps impossible for one to be precise in explaining what happened in one's mind while choosing a specific option. However, most of the informants were able to point out, at least in a general way, how they came to choose the options they chose. Through the interviews I had access to information that could not be obtained through a multiple choice format alone. The importance of the oral interviews is evident in the cases of respondents who marked a wrong option, (in general a distractor 'partially right'), but when they explained how they got there, it was clear that they had inferred the right meaning from the implicature. (See discussion on commercial # 3).

Table I - all commercials
percentage of right answers

	com#1	com#2	com#3	com#4	com#5	mean	median
NS	88.9	100	100	77.8	100	93.3	95
NNS	18.2	72.7	63.6	18.2	63.6	47.3	55

p<.001 Chi Square=16.36364

Table I gives the mean percent correct on all commercials for NSs and NNSs, according to their answers on the multiple-choice questionnaire. The test scores of the NNSs were extremely different from the ones of the NSs. The performance of NSs was 93.3% correct answers, while the NNSs got only 47.3%. A *median test* revealed that

the difference between the medians of the two groups was statistically significant at $p<.001$ (Chi Square=16.36364). These figures suggest that overall American NNSs of Portuguese infer different meanings from implicatures in Portuguese than NSs do.

It is interesting to point out that no NNS got all answers right (one NNS got 4 answers right), and also that all NNSs got at least one right answer.

A closer look at Table I also shows that the three commercials where the NSs agreed 100% (# 2, # 3, and # 5) were the ones where the NNSs got higher percentages of right answers. Similarly, the commercials for which the NSs chose distractors were the ones where the NNSs selected more wrong choices. In order to further analyze these results I called "easy" items the implicatures where the NSs got 100% correct answers, and "hard" items the ones where they made mistakes. Then, I conducted a *t-test* within the NNSs, comparing their means in the "hard" items with their means in the "easy" ones. Table II shows that the difference between these two means was statistically significant with $p<.01$ (2-tail). This result suggests that some implicatures may be harder to interpret than others are, independent of the person's cultural and linguistic background.

Table II
Dependent T-Test Results for Effects of Easy and Hard Items on Correct Inference within the NNS group

	mean	SD	t-value	df
easy	.6666	.3445	4.6705	10
hard	.1818			

p<.01

Focusing on one commercial at a time, I will discuss the performance of NSs and NNSs in a more detailed way, comparing their answers on the multiple-choice test with their explanations about these choices given in the oral interviews.

COMMERCIAL # 1: Vodka Orloff

Setting: a bar counter
Characters: The barman, two consumers (who are both the same man, one dressed formally -man Y- and the other in a bathrobe -man X), and a woman who arrives.

TEXT

(1) Man X: - **um momento, é Orloff?**
Man Y: - **não, mas quem é você?**
X: - **eu sou você amanhã. Com licença...Garçon, troca por Orloff.**
Y: - **mas, não são todas iguais?**
X: - **não, Orloff custa um pouco mais mas amanhã você não se arrepende.**
Y: - **mas, afinal, quem é você?**
X: - **eu sou você amanhã.**
Y: - **quem?**
Barman: - **telefone para o senhor.**
X: - **obrigado, e quem é?**
Barman: - **ela, amanhã.**
X: - **ahhhh...**

Voice over (adult male): **Pense em você amanhã. Exija Orloff hoje.**

****

OPTIONS:

<a> Não espere para amanhã: beba Orloff hoje
<b> Eu sou você amanhã. Eu sou o seu futuro
<c> Amanhã você não terá ressaca, e se sentirá tão bem como eu me sinto agora
<d> Amanhã você será um homem de muita sorte

Table III - comm. # 1: results by options (correct answer: <c>)

	<a>	<b>	<c>	<d>	total
NS	-	1	8	-	9
NNS	3	3	2	3	11

This commercial intends to emphasize the good qualities of Vodka Orloff, focusing on one aspect that distinguishes a good alcoholic drink from a bad one: how the consumer feels the following day, or 'the hangover aspect'. This message is given through the interesting utterance "Eu sou você amanhã" or "I am you tomorrow." This utterance, in the context of the commercial, conversationally implies (Maxim of Relevance) that 'man X' is saying to 'man Y' that if man Y drinks Orloff today, tomorrow he will have no hangover, he will feel as good and healthy as 'man X' himself now. Note that the two men look alike except that one is dressed formally and the other wears a bathrobe.

Table III shows that 8 out of 9 NSs chose the right answer <c>, while only 2 out of 11 NNSs chose <c> (18.2%). In the oral interviews the subjects who chose <c> indicated that they had understood the implicature:

(1.1) Because... I think the point is to call the attention of the man Y that if he drinks Orloff, he will feel good and will have no hangover. Man X is there, tomorrow, awake, with no sign of hangover (NS #9).

Three NNSs and one NS chose option <b> ('I am you tomorrow. I am your future'), which is too broad, and not as precise as <c>. These subjects seemed to be 'distracted' by the word 'futuro' (future) since the underlined utterance referred to some time in the future. However, the main focus was on 'how' man Y would 'feel' the following day:

(1.2) Because... he... it's the same person at the bar, one is in a suit, the other... was in a bathrobe... so... I mean... I chose that because he was talking to himself, how he'd look the next morning, or the next day. So, I mean, that'd be his future (NNS #8).

The explanations of three NNSs about why they chose distractor <a> suggested that since they did not understand the conversation, they used their own background knowledge about commercials of alcoholic drinks and chose the answer <a>: "Don't wait for tomorrow: drink Orloff today".

(1.3) I thought that was what they were trying to say. I thought they were trying just to advertise for the drink like... (NNS #7).

The inability to infer meaning from the implicature seemed to lead three other NNSs to direct their attention to a specific part of the context (the woman who arrives at the bar) and try to guess the right answer based on the context itself plus their own background knowledge. Two of them said that "I am you tomorrow" (1) meant <d>, and the man will have good luck because he will have that beautiful woman. The third NNS said:

(1.4) Well, they had that guy sitting in a bar... and the other guy suggested to drink Orloff and then... but the other guy was really cool, and he was sitting there like he was Hugh Heffner with his bathrobe on, I thought he said, tomorrow you will be a man with good luck (NNS #1).

The data shows that in contrast to the NNSs, the NSs found the the implicature analyzed in this commercial very simple. The interviews revealed that it was clear for the NSs that the highlighted utterance referred to 'how well' man Y would feel the following day after drinking Orloff. The American NNSs, on the other hand, seemed to have a hard time trying to understand the conversation. Their answers suggested that when learners do not fully understand L2 conversations, and they do not have pragmatic competence to infer meaning from the utterances even though they understand the lexical items, they apply the strategy of transferring previous knowledge about contextual aspects to infer some meaning from the utterance.

COMMERCIAL # 2: Stereo Philco Hitachi

Setting: living room
Characters: a young man and a bird

TEXT
(2) Voice over (male adult): **Philco Hitachi - o som que atrai quem entende de som**

****

OPTIONS:

<a> As pessoas que conhecem som/música de boa qualidade preferem Philco-Hitachi
<b> O som/música do stereo é um som que dá paz e prazer tanto ao homem quanto ao pássaro
<c> A música é muito viva. A música clássica é calmante para uma ave.
<d> Este stereo é feito somente para algumas pessoas não para outras

Table IV - comm. #2: results by options (correct answer: <a>)

	<a>	<b>	<c>	<d>	total
NS	9	-	-	-	9
NNS	8	2	1	-	11

This commercial shows a living room where a very relaxed young man turns on the stereo and listens to classical music, while a bird comes to his window. The telephone rings and the man stands up and turns off the stereo in order to answer the phone. In the meantime, the bird comes in and turns the stereo back on with its beak. Following this, we hear a voice over: "Philco-Hitachi: the sound which attracts one who knows sounds," which exploits the Maxim of Relevance. Actually, why say that Philco-Hitachi is the sound that 'attracts' the ones who recognize a good sound, unless you believe there are other types of sound equipment that may 'attract' those who cannot tell a good sound from a bad one?

This commercial was very easy for both NSs (100% correct) and NNSs (72.7% correct) (table IV), who explained why they chose option <a>:

(2.1) Well, the sound that attracts who... in this case, the people who knows sounds, so, it attracts in the sense that the person chooses it. The ones who knows sound and music of good quality prefer Philco-Hitachi (NS #6).

(2.2) Just like the bird, who knows a lot about music, and... appreciates music, somebody who would appreciate music I guess would buy that kind of stereo (NNS #8).

Distractors <b> and <c> which talked about the sound 'giving peace and pleasure to the man as well as to the bird', were chosen by three NNS subjects. It seemed that in these cases the subjects relied too much on the context, focusing only on the visual and 'ignoring' the underlined utterance itself:

(2.3) I marked <b> because... in the commercial he was just listening to the classical music, sitting back, being peaceful, looking like he's having fun, and <b> talks about his peace and pleasure... and I answered it (NNS #1).

The results collected in this commercial, which had the highest number of correct answers, suggest that if the listener/viewer does not lose track of the language itself, the visual context plays an important role in helping learners infer meaning from implicatures (note the high number of correct answers in this commercial). On the other hand, almost exclusive reliance on the context may lead to an incorrect interpretation of implicatures.

COMMERCIAL # 3: Fiat Uno

Setting: a street in Turin, Italy
Characters: the owner of the car and the police officer

(3) TEXT
Guarda: - **Documentos, senhor**
Dono do carro: - **Desculpe**
G: - **Ah! Lazaroni**
D: - **Eu sou brasileiro**
G: - **Oh, Lazaroni brasileiro!**
D: - **Eu sou técnico da seleção brasileira**
G: - **Só falta me dizer que este Uno também é brasileiro**
D: - **Sim, feito no Brasil, exportado para a Itália.**
G: - **Lazaroni brasileiro, técnico da seleção brasileira, guiando um Uno brasileiro.** **Prazer, eu sou o Papa.**

****

OPTIONS:
<a> O guarda é sarcástico e quer fingir que é o Papa
<b> O guarda não acredita nas informações que o dono do carro lhe deu
<c> O guarda quer mostrar ao dono do carro que na Itália ele é o chefe e portanto vai multar o carro de qualquer maneira
<d> O guarda está cumprimentando o dono do carro mas ainda quer saber mais explicações sobre o carro

Table V - comm. # 3: results by options (correct answer: <b>)

	<a>	<b>	<c>	<d>	total
NS	-	9	-	-	9
NNS	2	7	2	-	11

The office guard's utterance "Nice to meet you, I am the Pope" is obviously a false statement with no apparent relation to the previous remark. But if we assume that the police officer is being cooperative, this utterance implies that the information the owner of the car gave him is as hard to believe as the guard's utterance itself. One can get to these inferences by exploiting both the Maxims of Relation and Quality. If we accept that the officer means to be conveying something relevant, he may be successfully implicating that the owner of the car's assertions are equally false.

NSs had 100% agreement in this commercial and NNSs' score was 63.6%, which is much higher than their overall mean average. Subjects of both groups mentioned that they were familiar with that specific strategy of communication:

(3.1) "This is a very common expression in Brazil. When someone says something you don't believe, you say things like 'I am the Pope' or 'I am the Queen of England', something like that. So, the utterance wants to show that the officer did not believe the information Lazaronni gave him" (NS # 1)

(3.2) "Because the officer doesn't believe the answers the owner of the car gave him... he makes fun of the car owner by saying he is the Pope and he...gives the idea

that it's impossible that Brazil is exporting cars to Italy; that has to be a lie". (NNS #4)

Since this communicative strategy is very common to both Portuguese and English, I would suggest that the high number of correct inferences among the NNSs may be explained by the transfer of the formula in English as well as by the shared background knowledge necessary for the successful inference of meaning - in this case the knowledge about who the Pope is.

The oral interviews revealed interesting insights. For instance, one of the two NNSs who chose distractor <a>: 'the guard is sarcastic and wants to pretend to be the Pope' explained how he arrived at that wrong selection in ways that reflected the correct understanding of the implicature. He seemed to rely only on the word sarcastic, and of course there is sarcasm in the guard's utterance, but clearly he was not pretending to be the Pope. We notice that this choice and the correct one in part overlap, and that might explain the misinterpretation of this specific subject[3] He said:

(3.3) "...it seems to me... uhh... he is being sarcastic by saying he is the Pope. And... obviously he doesn't believe what the man is saying" (NNS #11)

The other informant who chose option <a> and the two informants who chose option <c> clearly misunderstood the implicature. Thus, despite the fact that this was an "easy" item, and that this implicature works the same in both Portuguese and English, some NNSs were not able to infer the right meaning from it.

COMMERCIAL # 4: Ollivetti typewriter

Setting: living room
Characters: 3 different pairs: boyfriend+girlfriend, father+son, wife+husband

(4) TEXT
(as people open their mouth, they make sounds of a typewriter and the following words appear on the screen, letter by letter)
1st pair: Written text: **Nossa, que linda!...**
2nd pair: Written text: **Puxa, pai: falou!**
3rd. pair: Written text: **Querida! eu...**
Written text: **"Neste Natal deixe as pessoas sem palavras. Dê uma Olivetti."**

****

OPTIONS:
<a> Neste Natal, não diga às pessoas da sua vida que você as ama: soletre seu amor por elas com uma Olivetti
<b> Neste Natal compre uma Olivetti para sua familia. Olivetti é um presente de palavras
<c> Olivetti é um presente tão bom que deixa as pessoas muito emocionadas
<d> Olivetti é um presente que permitirá as pessoas escreverem o que sentirem

Table VI - comm. #4: results by options (correct answer: <c>)

	<a>	<b>	<c>	<d>	total
NS	1	1	7	-	9
NNS	5	3	2	1	11

Imperative sentences are the vehicle for giving orders but they are also widely used to make suggestions. The metaphor in the utterances highlighted focused in this commercial can be understood through the exploitation of the Maxim of Quality, in conformance with the Maxim of Relevance. In this commercial people spoke through the sounds of a typewriter, 'translated' in subtitles. "This Christmas leave people speechless" implies that Olivetti is such a good present that if you give it as a Christmas gift, the people who

receive it will feel so emotional that they will not find words to explain their gratitude for what they have received. Although in this commercial the NSs had their lowest number of right answers, their score was still high: 77.8% (7 out of 9). But this implicature proved to be very hard for the NNSs, with only 2 informants out of 11 choosing the right answer (18.2%). However, all NSs and NNSs who chose the right option offered supporting explanation for their choices:

(4.1) "Because, when... uh... people are very happy become very emotional, they're left speechless... and so, I guess this nice typewriter would be a very nice present to receive, and people get emotional, and they're left speechless" (NNS # 8).

Five NNSs marked distractor <a>: "Do not tell the people in your life that you love them: spell your love with an Olivetti." And option <b>, "This Christmas buy an Olivetti for your family. Olivetti is a gift of words," was chosen by three NNSs. Some informants explained their choices similarly to NNS # 2, who said:

(4.2) "That is because... they didn't speak but just the words were typed out on the screen by the typewriter...uh... that commercial says uh... with our product you don't need to speak, because the typewriter will speak for itself, you know, just by having it, it did it."

Comparing this commercial with the previous one, I notice that both use mechanisms very common in English. When you do not

believe what you hear you may say things like 'yes, and I am the Pope'; similarly, when you want to say you are emotional, you may say 'I am speechless'. Why then did the NNSs find the last commercial so difficult? Why didn't they transfer to the L2 their L1 pragmatic competence?

One possible answer, based on the data from the oral interviews, is that in this specific commercial, the contextual clues given through people who 'did not speak' led them to distractors. In addition, as in the previous commercial, the similarity of strategies between the L1 and the L2 does not always lead the L2 learner to successfully infer meaning from implicatures in the L2.

COMMERCIAL # 5: Saúde Bradesco

Setting: indoors
Character: an adult male
(5) TEXT
Man: **Eu não gosto nem de lembrar. Uma dorzinha aqui ó, pequenininha, nem liguei. Foi aumentando, aumentando, passou pro braço, nem dei importância. Veio praquí, um aperto, foi descendo, descendo, chegou aqui, ó: Aiiiiii...!!!**
Voice over: **Com Saúde Bradesco você só pensa em ficar bom.**

****

OPTIONS:

<a> Ele não tem dinheiro no seu bolso e sofre muito porque não tem dinheiro
<b> Ele quer ir a algum lugar mas não pode ir porque não tem o seguro de saúde que precisa
<c> O dinheiro ou o cartão de saúde saiu do seu bolso e ele ficou muito desapontado com isso
<d> O custo do tratamento de saúde foi muito caro

Table VII - comm. #5: results by options (correct answer: <d>)

	<a>	<b>	<c>	<d>	total
NS	-	-	-	9	9
NNS	3	1	-	7	11

This commercial has a monologue spoken by a man, who describes how a small pain got bigger and bigger and reached a climax when it got to his pocket. He pulls his pocket inside out and says: 'Aiiiii...!!!'. Through the Maxim of Relevance 'Aiii...!!!' implies that his health problem really hurt when it was time to pay for it, or that the cost of his health treatment was very expensive. All NS informants selected the correct option and gave satisfactory explanations about their choices:

(5.1) Uh, because when he says 'Aiiiii', he has his hand in his pocket, and he means that what really hurts is his pocket... and in Brasil this means that he was paying something very expensive, in this case, his health treatment (NS #1).

As in the case of comm. # 3 and comm. # 4, this indirect means of expression seems also familiar to Americans. Among the NNSs we find 63.6% correct answers (7 out of 11), while the NSs got 100% right answers:

(6.2) I thought that... the way he described he was in pain... and the reason he was in pain is because the cost of the treatment for health was very expensive (NNS #3).

However, distractors <a> and <b> were also chosen by four NNS informants. These subjects were not clear in their explanations for their choices, and some mentioned a lack of money in the man's bank account.

As in commercial # 3, here I would suggest that the high number of correct answers among NNSs might be due to the fact that in English, people also use the same strategy to indicate money losses. Therefore, in *some* cases, the similarity of strategies in English and Portuguese would facilitate the inference of the correct implicature in the L2. However, for some NNSs this is not true.

3.3. CONCLUSION

In the present study, I considered five cases of implicature in contemporary Brazilian TV commercials and data show that, as in other studies on implicature in English (Devine, 1982; Bouton, 1988,1989), NNSs interpret at least some implicatures differently from the way NSs do. The difference between the performance of the two groups was statistically significant. In addition, a t-test suggested that some implictures are harder to understand than others are for both NSs and NNSs. Grice (1975) claims that besides sharing the linguistic code, the Cooperative Principle and its maxims, and the contextual factors, hearers and speakers also need to share specific items of background knowledge in order to understand a particular implicature. Therefore, our findings indicate that the linguistic/cultural background of our subjects *was* a predictor of their relative success on interpreting implicatures in the L2. It seems that each case of successful inference requires some specific knowledge which may not be equally shared among NSs and NNSs. The learners' pragmatic competence is not always transferred from

L1 to L2, *even in those cases where the implicatures work the same way in both languages*, and many factors interfere with this process. Thus, the data suggest that the inclusion of pragmatics in second language syllabuses could enable learners to communicate more effectively in the L2.

Future studies could verify how accurately NNSs interpret implicatures in commercials spoken in Portuguese compared with the same commercials dubbed in English. Although implicatures are very hard to translate, this study would give important insights into the relationship between linguistic, pragmatic and cultural components of communication and the NNSs' ability to interpret implicatures in Portuguese. Do the difficult types of implicature in Portuguese have the same characteristics as the difficult types of implicature in English? If the NSs of English can infer the correct meaning from an implicature in his L1, will they infer the correct meaning of the same implicature in Portuguese?

The present study was limited to a small sample of implicatures and worked with a small sample of informants. Similar studies need to be conducted with larger and more varied experimental groups to verify what types of implicature are particularly difficult for the American NNSs of Portuguese and why. Also, additional research focusing on different L1s and L2s needs to be conducted before we can generalize findings about the apparent difficulty NNSs have in inferring meaning from indirect speech in the L2. One study (Bouton 1988) involved subjects of different L1s, suggesting that culturally defined subsets of NNSs also perform differently from each other in trying to infer meaning from

implicatures in English. Do linguistic and cultural similarities or differences between an L1 and an L2 affect the learner's ability to infer meaning from implicatures in the L2? Should learners from different L1s have different pedagogical treatment in relation to explicit teaching of implicatures in a specific L2?

Research on materials which would promote pragmatic competence would also help teachers in helping their students achieve true proficiency in communicating in the L2.

NOTES

1 This commercial played with the word "cola," which, differently from English also means "glue" in Portuguese. To show the "strength" of that specific "cola" the commercial showed it glueing two cans of Pepsi and Coke. Some students understood correctly that "this glue can even bring Pepsi and Coke together. It's very strong and powerful." On the other hand, more than 50% of the students thought that cola (glue) was just another type of cola (like Pepsi and Coke). To avoid errors due to linguistic features this commercial was not included in the questionnaire.

2 This was very helpful because I found out that one of the distractors of a specific commercial was not totally clear and could be easily confounded with the correct answer even by a native speaker. Therefore, this distractor was eliminated and another one was selected and tested.

3 This distractor, therefore, is a problematic one. Although option <b> offers the most precise choice, in potential future use of this questionnaire, <a> should be modified in such a way as not to be confounded with the correct answer.

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APPENDIX

TEXTS of the COMMERCIALS
Translation

COMMERCIAL # 1: Orloff Vodka

Setting: a bar counter
Characters: The barman, two consumers (same man, one dressed formally and the other in a bathrobe), and a woman who arrives.

TEXT

Man X: **-just a minute, is it Orloff?**
Man Y: **-no, but who are you?**
X: **-I am you tomorrow. Excuse me...Waiter, change to Orloff.**
Y: **-but, aren't they all the same?**
X: **-no, Orloff costs a little more but tomorrow you won't be sorry.**
Y: **-who are you after all?**
X: **- I am you tomorrow.**
Y: **-who?**
triiiimmmm (ring)
Barman: **-telephone for you.**
X: **-thanks. And who is it?**
Barman: **-she, tomorrow.**
X: **-ahhhh...**
Voice over (adult male): **Think about you tomorrow. Make sure you have Orloff today.**

****

What does the underlined utterance mean in that context?
a) Don't wait for tomorrow: drink Orloff today
b) I am you tomorrow. I am your future
c) Tomorrow you will have no hangover and will feel as good as I feel now.
d) Tomorrow you will be a lucky man

COMERCIAL Nº 2: Stereo Philco Hitachi

Setting: living room
Characters: a young man and a bird

TEXT
Voice over: **Philco Hitachi - the sound that attracts the ones who recognize a good sound**

****

What does the underlined utterance mean in that context?

a) People who recognize music/sound (equipment) of good quality choose Philco-H
b) the sound/music of the stereo is a sound that gives peace and pleasure to the man as well as to the bird
c) The music is very alive. Classical music is calming for a bird.
d) This stereo is made for some people, not for others

COMMERCIAL Nº 3: Fiat Uno

Setting: a street in Turin, Italy
Characters: the owner of a car and a police officer

TEXT
Guarda: **- Documents, sir**
Dono do carro: **- I am sorry**
G: **- Ah! Lazaroni**
D: **- I am Brazilian**
G: **- Oh, Lazaroni from Brazil!**
D: **- I am the Brazilian soccer team coach**
G: **- Do you wanna tell me this Uno is also Brazilian?**
D: **- Yes, made in Brazil, and exported to Italy**
G: **- Lazaroni from Brazil, coach of the Brazilian soccer team, driving a Brazilian Uno. Nice to meet you I am the Pope.**

****
What does the underlined utterance mean in that context?

a) The guard is sarcastic and wants to pretend to be the Pope
b) The guard doesn't believe in the information the owner of the car gave him
c) The guard wants to show to the owner of the car that he is the boss in Italy and therefore he will give him a fine anyway
d) The guard is greeting the owner of the car but he still wants more explanation about the car

COMERCIAL Nº 4: Ollivetti typewriter

Setting: living room
Characters: 3 different pairs: boyfriend+girlfriend, father+son, wife+husband

TEXT
(as people open their mouth, they make sounds of a typewriter and the following words appear on the screen, letter by letter)

1st pair: Written text: **Gosh, how beautiful!...**
2nd pair: Written text: **Gee, Dad: cool!**
3rd. pair: Written text: **Honey! I...**
Written text: **"This Christmas leave people speechless. Give them an Olivetti."**

****
What does the underlined utterance mean in that context?

a) This Christmas don't tell the people in your life that you love them: spell your love with an Olivetti
b) This Christmas buy an Olivetti for your family. Olivetti is a gift of words
c) Olivetti is such a good present that it makes people feel strong emotion
d) Olivetti is a gift that will permit people to write down their feelings

COMERCIAL Nº 5: Saúde Bradesco

Setting: indoors
Character: an adult male

TEXT
Man: **I don't even like to remember... It was a just a little pain, right here, very little, I didn't care. It increased, increased, reached the arm, I didn't care. Got here, a pressure, it went down, down, reached right here: Auuuchhhh..**
Voice over: **With Bradesco Health Insurance you only think of getting better (feel good?)**

****
What does the underlined utterance mean in that context?

a) He doesn't have money in his pocket and suffers because he doesn't have it
b) He wants to go someplace but he cannot because he doesn't have the health insurance he needs
c) The money or the Insurance card left his pocket and he was very disappointed about that
d) The cost of the health treatment was very expensive